

New REACH Program Manager

Blishda Lacet is the new REACH program manager at Public Health. She recently moved here from Boston in order to be closer to family. Blishda was born in Haiti and moved to the US when she was two years old. Blishda’s father wanted his children to have unique names, so the name “Blishda” is invented. Before beginning work at Public Health - Seattle and King County, Blishda worked as a consultant for Senior Services of Seattle/King County.

Blishda has over 12 years of experience in public health. Her experience includes working as a bridge connector among state agencies, non-profit organizations, hospitals, and community groups. She has worked with non-profit organizations and coalitions on both managerial and programmatic issues that limit their success. Blishda has also provided technical assistance and training to support coalitions in developing community health programming and improvement projects.

She worked with the Boston REACH coalition to assist them in developing and conducting an assessment of their community. The training and TA included providing an overview of effective coalition building, conducting community assessments, asset mapping, and implementation of a community action plan.

You can contact Blishda by e-mail at blishda.lacet@metrokc.gov or call her at 206-296-7621.

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The mission of the REACH Coalition is to reduce diabetes health disparities experienced by communities of color. Through strong partnerships, REACH will support the empowerment of individuals, families, and communities, and create sustainable long-term approaches to prevention and control of diabetes utilizing all appropriate community resources in King County.

Upcoming Events and Announcements

- 9/28/06 - REACH Coalition meeting 3 p.m. - 5 p.m. at International Community Health Services.
- 10/17-20/06- Quality Health Care for Culturally Diverse Populations Conference. Renaissance Seattle Hotel.
- 10/31/06- REACH/STEPS/HMC Diabetes half day training at Harborview Medical Center. Contact Diana Vinh at (206) 205-1589.

For more information on regular REACH meetings and activities, please contact Blishda Lacet at 206.296.7621

FOR NEWSLETTER HARDCOPY, PLEASE CONTACT:

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If you have suggestions or want to submit articles for the newsletter, please contact Javier Amaya at javier.amaya@metrokc.gov or (206) 205-3921 by the 10th of April, June, August, October and December.

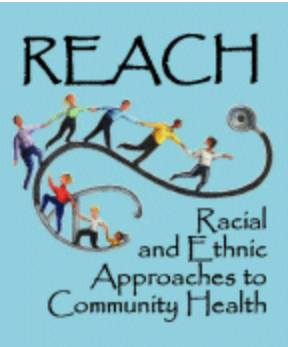
REACH FOR HEALTH

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“Our job is to promote lasting lifestyle changes”
Eudora Carter, Liaison for the Center for MultiCultural Health



Eudora Carter is the Community Liaison for the Center for MultiCultural Health (CMCH) in Seattle.

CMCH is the lead agency for the REACH Program in the African-American community. Carter is in charge of coordinating the educational sessions and diabetes support groups aimed toward African-Americans affected by diabetes, their family members and friends.

She explains that classes start four times per year in January, April, July and October, lasting about 11 weeks per session. Participants include a wide range of people affected by diabetes in different ways, including those recently diagnosed or persons known to have diabetes for years. The goal, she says, is to be as inclusive as possible.

Carter says that CMCH gets referrals from a variety of sources like Harborview Medical Center, community and public clinics, doctor’s offices, community

outreach and personal referrals. The classes are particularly important, knowing that medical providers have very limited time to educate patients. The CMCH classes are free to interested persons and people can learn a lot about managing their disease and taking personal responsibility.

The classes emphasize knowing the impact of diabetes on the cardiovascular systems, promoting healthy lifestyle changes, learning self-management skills, dealing with emotions and knowing how to properly measure and record glucose levels. It is a breakaway from the “inevitable” model, where one believes they cannot effect change and the worst complications take over people’s lives.

The program gets help and support from numerous members in the community and also from professionals, like the always popular Dr. Juana R. Royster, of WSU/ Cooperative Extension, who facilitates the bulk of the education program for CMCH. The importance of nutritious eating habits and physical movement is highlighted.

One segment of the classes teaches how to prepare dishes such as pizza, vegetables, sweet potatoes, etc. with

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Cheza’s Chat Corner

Even if we don’t practice it, we all recognize the importance of prevention when it comes to diabetes, as well as other chronic diseases. Recently I have been thinking more and more about the prevention of kidney disease. Kidney disease is one of the more devastating complications of diabetes and is the cause of many diabetes-related deaths. The overwhelming majority of people receiving kidney dialysis are people whose diabetes led to kidney disease.

The Northwest Kidney Centers is an organization that has been known as the place to go for dialysis. Their representatives came to REACH a few weeks ago to enlist our support and collaboration in getting the word out to the public that kidney disease can be prevented and dialysis can be avoided. They are encouraging the public to learn about the number that everyone and their medical providers can monitor to recognize when the kidneys are at, or may be losing, their proper function. This number is the glomerular filtration rate, or GFR, which should be higher than 60.

According to CEO Joyce Jackson and Director of the Chronic Kidney Disease Program, Dr. Leanna Tishler, MD, many people are walking around with mild kidney disease and do not know it. Does this sound familiar? Yes, because many people have diabetes and do not know it, or high blood pressure, or mild heart disease, or even cancer.

It’s nice to know that a kidney function test can tell us if we are in the high risk zone and can lead us to prevention activities.

Our very own REACH Coalition member, Dr. Bessie Young-Mielcarek, MD, also attended this meeting. She has been trying to get Coalition members to prioritize a focus on kidneys for years. She is on the Board of the Northwest Kidney Centers and she has been the lead planner for an African American community kidney conference for the last three years. Dr. Young-Mielcarek and Dr. Tishler are in the field of medicine called nephrology – the study of the kidneys.

Meanwhile, when I was attending the “Blacks In Government” (BIG) conference in New York at the end of August, I met another nephrologist who gave a talk about diabetes and kidney disease. He reinforced everything that Bessie and Joyce and Leanna were saying. The Northwest Kidney Centers is sponsoring a kidney expo at Qwest Field on October 14, and while the REACH Coalition decided not to have a table at the expo, some of you may be able to take the time to stop by. Stay tuned as we learn more about this important health issue.

Cheza Garvin, Ph.D, MPH, MSW, is the Principal Investigator for REACH and Director of the Chronic Disease Prevention and Healthy Aging Program at Public Health- Seattle and King County.

Rox’s Review: Evaluation Update

Hullo all! Summer is barreling along, and our current survey collection numbers attest to the fury of activity. To date, we have collected **1197** pretest and **825** matched posttest surveys from REACH participants. The latest excitement is over the initiation of our first cycle of education classes (and first batch of surveys!) for the Samoan community in July. This is significant because after several years of difficulty, we have finally succeeded in introducing much-needed and wanted activities to a part of the Pacific Islander community.

For this issue, I would like to focus a bit on the Evaluation Team’s dissemination efforts. As we enter the final year of our grant, it is only natural that we spend more time mulling over what we have learned these past several years and sharing this with others through presentations, publications and other venues.

Earlier this summer, Cheza Garvin, Noel Chrisman and I were busy presenting our intervention findings and lessons learned through working as a Coalition to other public health professionals. Members of the Coalition are preparing a REACH roundtable discussion for the Fifth National Conference on “*Quality Health Care for Culturally Diverse Populations*” which will be held in Seattle this October. The discussion will focus on challenges we have faced as a multiethnic coalition for community diabetes education and support.

As I mentioned in the last newsletter, we wrapped up a round of systems change interviews, and our Coalition member interviews culminated in a report slated for discussion at our September Coalition meeting. (The discussion was originally scheduled for July but was postponed due to summer lull attendance.)

We are currently working on a paper based on our systems change discussions and interviews, describing our findings from the interviews, the influence of the REACH Coalition on any changes and factors that have impacted the type and degree of change at our REACH partner agencies.

Other publication efforts include an historical overview of the Coalition and its evolution, and submissions to a special supplement of the *Journal of General Internal Medicine* describing REACH’s experiences with language barriers and their impact on health care and access.

If you have any ideas for paper or presentation topics, things you would like to hear or read more about regarding our REACH program, or suggestions on people, publications, or other media venues that you think should hear about REACH, please let us know! You know how to reach me. Email: Roxana.chen@metrokc.gov Tel: 206.205.4162.

Maria Koh, a long time supporter of REACH

Maria Koh is an individual member of the REACH coalition. Maria’s academic background is in chemistry and nutrition. She worked several years for the University of Washington Medical Center (UWMC) as a clinical nutrition director in charge of developing and assisting in related research. In her career with UWMC, she also provided lectures to medical, nursing and pharmacy students.

While working for UW, Maria became the liaison for the Chinese community in the NIH-funded Diabetic Prevention Program. After retiring from the UWMC, she joined the American Diabetes Association as coordinator of the Asian Diabetic Coalition. To this day, Maria continues involved in educating the community on diabetes.

Maria Koh has been a member of the REACH coalition since its inception. She has been active participating in numerous meetings and regular activities. Maria believes that the REACH coalition fulfills core needs of people living with diabetes. She emphasizes that working with diverse Asian communities can be challenging and is important that we communicate effectively with people in their own languages.

Maria points out that the stigma and shame of having and accepting a chronic disease as diabetes, may be feelings of the past. She thinks, we can help people living with diabetes develop self-confidence and offer them compassionate support.

When Maria is invited to talk to Mandarin and Cantonese speaking clients at ICHS, she feels a special relationship of trust develops with them. The clients always express their gratitude for the information they get from Maria, particularly when she calls many of them at home to find out how are they doing.

For Koh, speaking to large groups may not be the most effective way to educate her community. She believes that it is important to compare strategies and techniques that have been successful with other ethnic groups, like the experience of Sea Mar doing plays on diabetes with Latinos.

Many clients living with diabetes tell Maria of their concern of the rising costs of medicines and supplies, especially needles and reagent strips. Maria hopes that policies could be implemented to keep the costs down, like subsidies from manufacturers for uninsured, low-income patients.

“Our job is to promote lasting lifestyle changes” (continued from page 1)

healthier ingredients while keeping aroma, texture and taste essentially the same. Class participants learn how to move gradually from whole milk to 1%, for example, and still get the support from family members, partners and friends.

Learning how to eat healthier includes incorporating into the diet more lean meats like roasted turkey, and chicken, fish, new salads and using whole grain products. Learning how to read nutrition labels, and ingredients is imperative to diabetes management. Being creative with food is important and can be fun.

Eudora says eating healthier can take more time to plan and prepare and it could cost a bit more, but the results compensate for the effort.

Improving physical activity is essential in the management of diabetes. People can start by simply stretching; using soup cans to lift as

weights, walking indoors or around the block if possible.

Eudora insists that for her, it is very important to eliminate the radical concept of “all or none”. She thinks that behavior change can be gradual and incremental, where eating healthier is only one component of self-managing diabetes. It is not a matter of “giving up everything at once”.

In Eudora Carter’s own words, “The REACH program at the Center for MultiCultural Health is unduplicated, culturally specific and customized to the needs of community members living with diabetes.” Carter concludes that CMCH has a proven track record in serving the community for over 30 years and is working hard to serve the needs of the community. “We hope to help our people in maintaining healthier lifestyle changes into the future.”

For more information, you can contact Eudora Carter at the Center for MultiCultural Health at (206) 461-6910, ext. 218.
By Javier Amaya, MPH